

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 SWF-02 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-11 FRB-03 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-03

SP-03 STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SS-20

USIA-15 M-02 A-01 OPR-02 SY-04 SCCT-02 NIC-01 DRC-01

/192 W

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R 151534Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4144

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 4013

PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, NL

SUBJ: DUTCH FARMER UNREST

REF: (A) THE HAGUE 3825 ; (B) THE HAGUE 3894

1. SUMMARY: AFTER TEN DAYS OF NONVIOLENT BUT INCONVENIENCING
DEMONSTRATIONS, DUTCH FARMERS ARE PAUSING TO ASSESS GOVERNMENT
PROPOSALS. GON HAS MADE SOME CONCESSIONS BUT HOPES TO FIND
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GENERAL SOLUTION TO FARMERS' DIFFICULTIES WORKING WITHIN EC

FRAMEWORK. END SUMMARY.

2. "TOO-SOF ATTITUDE" OF TRADITIONAL FARM ORGANIZATIONS (CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT, NATIONAL) HAS SPAWNED SOME 28 FARMER "ACTION GROUPS" THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IGNORING CALLS FOR PATIENCE, ACTION GROUPS LED FARMERS ON TEN-DAY SPREE OF DISRUPTIVE BUT NONVIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS INCLUDING BLOCKING OF CITY CENTERS, MAJOR ROADS, AND BORDER CROSSINGS. WAVE OF UNREST CRESTED AT MASS MEETING AT UTRECHT, AUG 10, ATTENDED BY 30,000 FARMERS, FARM LEADERS, VARIOUS POLITICIANS, AND MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FINANCE.

3. TRADITIONAL FARM ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PLAYED LITTLE PART IN EITHER FOMENTING OR CALMING DEMONSTRATIONS, AND SOLUTIONS THEY HAVE PROPOSED FOR FARM PROBLEMS HAVE NOT BEEN HAILED BY RANK AND FILE. CROWD PERMITTED ONLY ONE LEADER, (R. ZIJLSTRA, CHRISTIAN FARMERS' ASSN.) TO SPEAK BRIEFLY AT UTRECHT MEETING AND CALMED DOWN LONG ENOUGH

TO HEAR MINAG VAN DER STEE TELL THEM, "I AM WELL AWARE OF YOUR PROBLEMS. I KNOW THAT YOU ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FORMED THE POLICY IN THE LAST YEARS." HOWEVER, A SOUTH HOLLAND GLASSHOUSE FARMER WHO HAS EMERGED AS LEADER OF THE ACTION GROUPS RECEIVED LUST ACCLAIM FROM THE CROWD WHEN HE PRESENTED FARMERS' DEMANDS TO GOVERNMENT.

4. THE TRADITIONAL FARM ORGANIZATIONS PROPOSED: IMPROVEMENT OF INCOME VIA THE VAT, POSTPONEMENT OF TAX PAYMENTS, REVISION OF NATURAL GAS PRICE POLICY, FUEL OIL SUBSIDIES FOR FARMERS HAVING FINANCIAL TROUBLES AS RESULT OF INCREASED OIL PRICES, AND INCREASE OF EC AGRICULTURAL PRICES BY 4 PERCENT.

5. THE ACTION GROUPS DEMANDED: AN INCREASE OF 50 PERCENT IN SUGAR BEET AND GRAIN PRICES, INCREASE OF 10 DUTCH CENTS/LITER OF MILK, 2 GUILDERS/KILO INCREASE IN BEEF, 4 CENTS/KILO RISE IN PROCESSING POTATOES, INCREASE OF 4 CENTS PER EGG, QUARTERLY REVIEW OF PRICES, PRICE CONTROLS FOR ALL FARM PRODUCTION INPUTS, AND SO ON AND ON.

6. GON REACTED TO DEMONSTRATIONS AT POLICY LEVEL ON AUG 8. MINAG VAN DER STEE CUT SHORT HIS FRENCH VACATION TO RETURN FOR CABINET MEETING AT WHICH PROPOSALS OF TRADITIONAL FARM ORGANIZATIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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DISCUSSED. DEMANDS OF ACTION GROUPS WERE IGNORED IN LINE WITH GON POLICY TO RECOGNIZE ONLY ESTABLISHED FARM ORGANIZATIONS. OUTLINE OF GON MEASURES WAS ISSUED THAT AFTERNOON.

7. SITUATION HAS CALMED SINCE WEEKEND, AND ON AUG 13 GON ANNOUNCED FOLLOWING PACKAGE: (A) CHANGE IN VAT REGULATION FOR FARMERS (COST TO GON, 120 MILLION GUILDERS); (B) DELAY UNTIL DEC 31 OF INSTALLMENT PAYMENT ON 1973 INCOME TAXES (IF PARLIAMENT AMENDS

LAW); (C) EXTENSION OF FUEL OIL SUBSIDY FOR GLASSHOUSE FARMERS FROM OCT 1, 1974, TO JULY 1, 1975; (D) HOLD PRESENT PRICE OF NATURAL GAS USED BY GLASSHOUSE FARMERS FOR 95 PERCENT OF 1973/74 SEASON FOR CONSUMPTION DURING 1974/75; GAS USED ABOVE THAT LEVEL WOULD BE AT INCREASED PRICES; (E) PRECT PAYMENT TO FARMERS TO COMPENSATE FOR PAST GUILDER REVALUATION, 36.50 GUILDERS/HECTARE FOR GRAINS AND 60.00/HA. FOR SUGAR BEETS (COST TO GON, 20 MILLION); (F) 5-MILLION-GUILDER FUND FOR RENOVATION ON PRIVATE FARMS; (G) PAYMENT OF DELAYED SLAUGHTER PREMIUMS FOR NONDAIRY CATTLE (COST TO GON, 10 MILLION; TO EC, 13 MILLION); AND (H) CONSUMER BEEF PROMOTION CAMPAIGN (COST, HALF MILLION EACH FOR GON AND EC).

8. GON TAKES CREDIT FOR FIXING SEPT 3 DATE FOR AG MINISTERS COUNCIL MEETING. WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT DUTCH PROPOSALS THERE WILL BE.
GOULD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, FARM BLOCS, AGRICULTURAL POLICIES, AGRICULTURAL PRICES, SUBSIDIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974THEHA04013
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740224-1115
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740843/aaaabkuj.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) THE HAGUE 3825 ; (B) THE HAGUE 3, 894
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2002 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <26 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DUTCH FARMER UNREST
TAGS: EAGR, NL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005